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2004 Olympics a Security Success Thanks to NNSA

U.S. and Greek Officials Commemorate Their Collaborative Activities to Ensure Security of the Olympic Games

WASHINGTON, DC – The 2004 Olympic Games, including the Paralympics which came to an end this week, closed without any nuclear or radiological security incidents. The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) helped strengthen security at Greek border crossings, seaports, airports, and sensitive locations and facilities. In the joint initiative aimed at protecting the Olympics from nuclear and radiological threats, NNSA also provided a large number of handheld radiation detectors and assisted security in other areas.

NNSA representatives and the Greek Atomic Energy Commission met last week to commemorate this successful collaboration. Professor Leonidas Carmarinopoulos, President of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC), and NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Paul Longworth, met at the GAEC's headquarters to honor this significant achievement and recognize the experts that were part of this historic collaboration.

In response to a 2003 GAEC request via the International Atomic Energy Agency, NNSA worked with Greek colleagues to enhance the security of the Demokritos research reactor and to install radiation detection equipment at five locations, including the new Athens international airport and the port of Piraeus. GAEC and NNSA further cooperated to upgrade security at medical and industrial facilities and to enhance the capabilities of incident response personnel by providing hand-held radiation detectors and training in their uses.

Longworth thanked Greek officials for their professional and hospitable collaboration with NNSA security specialists. "The global security of nuclear and other radioactive material is a shared responsibility. The U.S. is proud to collaborate with Greece and other countries to help enhance global security," Longworth said. He further noted that while the recently implemented security enhancements supported security during the Olympic Games, the enhancements will continue to deter and protect against terrorist attacks using nuclear or other radioactive material.

Following the meeting with GAEC President Carmarinopoulos, Longworth visited the Demokritos nuclear research reactor and observed a demonstration of the reactor's new security system. He noted that more than two millennia ago, the Greek scientist and philosopher Demokritos articulated the atomic theory -- the basis of the current nuclear era.

Following his visit to the research reactor, Mr. Longworth visited the port of Piraeus and the Athens Airport to see the equipment provided under NNSA's Second Line of Defense Program, and met briefly with Greek customs officials who now operate the equipment. To complete his tour of NNSA-security enhancements, he visited the Ygeia Private Hospital.

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